GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:500
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2015
Hindi as Official Language in UN
Sonker Smt. Neelam

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to make Hindi as one of the Official Languages in the United Nations and the current status of the same; and

(b) whether India has assessed the expected expenditure to be incurred annually once Hindi is introduced as an official language in the UN and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) The Government has been actively taking necessary measures for the introduction of Hindi as one of the Official Languages of the UN. A High level Committee under the Chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister was constituted on 26 February, 2003 followed by a sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State for External Affairs in August, 2003 to look into the matter and take necessary measures. Keeping in view this objective, the 8th World Hindi Conference was organized in New York on 13 July 2007 and its inaugural session was held at the UN Headquarters, which was attended by the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon (10 World Hindi Conferences have been held till date all over the world; 10th World Hindi Conference was organised from 10 to 12 Sep 2015 in Bhopal). One of the recommendations of the session on "Hindi in Foreign Policy" (Videsh Neeti Mein Hindi) at the 10th World Hindi Conference was also that Hindi should be made a UN language. A Committee has been established under the Chairmanship of External Affairs Minister for compliance with this and other recommendations. In addition, a World Hindi Secretariat has been set up in Mauritius since 11 February 2008 to promote Hindi as an international language. On several occasions, Indian leaders have delivered statements at the UN in Hindi. On 27 September 2014, Prime Minister addressed the 69th UN General Assembly Session at New York in Hindi. He also addressed the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit at New York in Hindi on 25 September, 2015. On 01 October 2015, External Affairs Minister delivered her statement at the General Debate of the 70th UN General Assembly Session at New York in Hindi. Necessary arrangements were made for simultaneous interpretation of these statements in English by the Permanent Mission of India in New York. The Government of India"s sustained efforts have also ensured that the United Nations offers its programmes on the UN Radio Website in Hindi also. The Government continues to work steadfastly in popularizing Hindi and for the objective of Hindi being designated as a UN language.

(b) The total cost provisioned by UN on providing services in all the current UN official languages (6 Languages) is approximately US$ 492 million for the current biennium 2014-2015. Given that this cost is for six official languages for two years, the cost for provision of services in one UN language is approximately US$ 41 million per annum. This cost is for provision of overall services including documentation, translation, interpretation, verbatim reporting, printing etc. in all the four UN Offices viz. New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. In case of including Hindi as an official language, there would be additional cost for providing infrastructure/equipment and space for additional interpreters. Expenditure incurred towards introduction of a new official language would have to be borne by Member States based on the scale of assessment.